

LIBRARIES MEET THE GRID: LIBRARIANS IN CYBERSPACE

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Abstract

We propose to introduce further the technologies being used in libraries to further the use of the Web 2.0 phase of global computing. Sources have been selected to better represent the technologies being discussed.

Keywords:

Web 2.0, collaboration, libraries, blogs, wikis, webcasts, RSS, social networking

Introduction

Collaboration is a term used among librarians and with their patrons that is changing. Traditional patrons whose familiar habits are to come to the library to look up online information and retrieve material from stacks are being replaced. These replacement users want to be interactive in a hurry, and want immediate solutions to their information needs. Library services are evolving to satisfy these information needs.

As new technologies emerge, librarians are taking advantage in order to build toward a more interactive and a higher rate of satisfaction for users.

In order to realize immediate feedback and work more efficiently librarians are realizing a need for technologies that allow for feedback, clarification, interaction and immediate gratification of their information needs. Some of the newest services such as blogging, podcasting, wikis, instant messaging, RSS aggregator feeds, webcasting, webconferencing, social networking, and the use of virtual reality are leading the way into the future.

Technologies Making the Difference:

Under each category below, we hope to provide you examples of these services that librarians are promoting with enthusiasm to move us into the next level of cyberspace.

BLOGGING

A blog is a personal web site used to discuss ideas, or make comments and observations. A blog may function as a personal journal. Others can add information to a discussion, but not edit existing content. It is displayed in reverse chronological order, so the most current entry is at the beginning. Blogs almost always contain text, but may also contain pictures, videos, or audio. Each posting has a unique URL. This technology is often used by a single author or a small group to display a specific topic of interest.

Some of the advantages to blogs are 1) since most have WYSIWYG editors, you don't have to learn code so they are easy to do; 2) it's an easy way to share information; 3) you can have multiple authors; 4) it's can give your web page a human touch by adding personal commentary.

Some of the disadvantages to blogs are 1) they must be searched using an external search engine; 2) it can be slow going to plod through the blog; and 3) some people get carried away with stream of consciousness writing.

If you decide to start a blog for your library make sure it has a purpose and that you have the staff to update it regularly.

WordPress

<http://wordpress.org/about/>

WordPress is open source blogging software used by a large number of bloggers including the New York Times. WordPress is written in PHP, runs under MySQL database and uses a GNU General Public License.

Blogging Libraries Wiki

http://www.blogwithoutalibrary.net/links/index.php?title=Welcome_to_the_Blogging_Libraries_Wiki

This is a blog list of libraries of all types. This is really a wiki with an article that contains the list of blogs for libraries and librarians. There is a discussion tab with a running commentary about the Blogging Libraries Wiki.

Examples:

R.B. House Undergraduate Library Web Log,

http://www.lib.unc.edu/house/ul_blog.html?blogfile=ullibrary

Binghamton Univ. Libraries, Science Library Blog,

<http://library.lib.binghamton.edu/mt/science/>

Case Western, Kelvin Smith Library Weblog,

<http://library.case.edu/ksl/>

Drexel Univ. Libraries, List of [their] RSS Feeds,

<http://www.library.drexel.edu/blogs/index.html>

Coastal and Environmental Sciences, <http://lsulibrariessce.blogspot.com/>

Georgia State – <http://www.library.gsu.edu/news/index.asp>

Blog Software Breakdown

<http://www.asymptomatic.net/blogbreakdown.htm>

If you are wondering which software to use to set up the best blog for your needs, then this site provides a chart to help you do that. Owen Winkler, the author has done a thorough job of providing information about blog software. The chart is a detailed breakdown showing known blogging software and characteristics used to compare their values.

Blogs for Librarians

Theoretical Librarian (Gerry McKiernan) <http://theoretical-librarian.blogspot.com/>

LIS News – <http://www.lisnews.com>

Scholarly Electronic Publishing Weblog

http://connect.educause.edu/blog/cwbailey/scholarly_electronic_publishing_weblog_11_20_06/12206

Charles W. Bailey, Jr. has initiated to highlight information about “new scholarly literature and resources” such as books, blogs, and white papers. It is being hosted by Educause.

WIKIS

A wiki is a web site available by permission and additional content can be added and edited.

Some of the advantages are that 1) you can share expertise; 2) collaborative editing can insure accuracy; 3) it's an easy way to create documentation or articles; 4) users don't have to know HTML or an editor.

A few disadvantages can be that people may add incorrect or misinformation and that it takes constant monitoring by the wiki community to insure if it does happen it is corrected.

pbwiki

<http://pbwiki.com/>

A hosted wiki run by David Weekly of the Bay area. It is free but you must endure ads from Google. For-pay additional space is also available. This is a wiki which is very easy to set up and is very popular.

pmWiki

<http://www.pmwiki.org/wiki/PmWiki/PmWikiFeatures>

This is an open source wiki software which is very popular. It will run with most web servers that uses PHP scripts.

Wikipedia.com

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wiki>

Largest wiki on the Internet open to editing by anyone. It is used as a comprehensive encyclopedia. Though information is sometimes not reliable, it is one of the most used web sites in the world.

LIANZA/ITSIG wiki

<http://wiki.lianza.org.nz>

Done by the IT Special Interest Group of the Library and Information Association of New Zealand/Aotearoa. Includes Research SIG which allows anyone to create a page about research projects relevant to New Zealand Libraries.

Library Success: A Best Practices Wiki

Main Page: http://www.libsuccess.org/index.php?title=Main_Page

About Page:

http://www.libsuccess.org/index.php?title=Library_Success:_A_Best_Practices_WikiAbout

"Library Success was created by Meredith Farkas to be a collaborative space for librarians to share success stories and inspire each other to do great things in our own libraries." The site is becoming dated but is a good form for a library wiki.

Library Instruction Wiki – Stop Reinventing the Wheel

<http://instructionwiki.org>

"The Library Instruction Wiki was originally developed by the Oregon Library Association's (<http://www.olaweb.org>) Library Instruction Roundtable (<http://www.olaweb.org/org/lirt.shtml>), all librarians and others interested in library instruction are welcome and encouraged to contribute"

Retrieved from "http://instructionwiki.org/Library_Instruction_Wiki>About"

LIS Wiki

http://liswiki.org/wiki/Main_Page

This wiki was created to augment information about Library and Information Science. It is open to all who are interested.

Online Programming For All Libraries (OPAL)

<http://www.opal-online.org/>

An online community dedicated to all librarians, offering training, podcasts, and announcements of professional interest.

VIDEO AND IMAGE SHARING

YouTube.com

<http://www.youtube.com/index>

<http://www.youtube.com/t/about>

YouTube is a free service to share original videos via the Internet. Accessible for free download and sharing of videos most of which have been produced using Flash. A popular website that is being purchased by Google.

Flickr

http://flickr.com/learn_more.gne

This is a popular open source photo sharing site.

Photobucket

<http://photobucket.com/>

Is a free searchable video and audio sharing site.

Podcasting Tools

<http://www.podcasting-tools.com/>

Podcasting is a way to provide an audio show in MP3 format usually interfaced by using a RSS feed written in XML that includes links to the audio file. Podcasting Tools will tell you all about it.

RSS FEEDS

RSS is generally considered an abbreviation for “Really Simple Syndication.” It is a form of XML that allows for easy distribution and updating of headlines to personal webpages, newsreaders and aggregators. It solves the problem of having to go to many sites regularly by combining all of the headlines with links to the web pages in one place. For those who want to monitor many web sites for updates, RSS can save considerable time.

All About RSS

www.faganfinder.com/search/rss.shtml

RSS for Non-Techie Librarians

<http://www.llrx.com/features/rssforlibrarians.htm>

This is an article written in 2002 about RSS.

RSS Tutorial

<http://www.lawlibtech.com/archives/000560.html>

An article about RSS feeds from a law librarian blog.

WEBCASTING AND WEBCONFERENCING

Webcasting and Webconferencing allow for the delivery of programs to people offsite. The programs can be live or archived. The advantage is the program is not stored on the user's computer, but on the producer's server. Webcasting can be one-way or allow for interaction. Webconferencing is for interaction among the participants using the Internet.

Accela Communications

<http://www.accelacommunications.com/products/accelacast/accelacast.html>

A commercial webcast site. They will help you with the production and distribution of your webcasts.

Webex

<http://www.webex.com/overview/web-meeting-resources.html>

A commercial webconferencing company who charges by the amount of time used on the webcast. This is used by SirsiDynix for training and the SirsiDynix Institute.

Infinite Conferencing

<http://www.infiniteconferencing.com/web-conferencing-solution.asp>

A commercial webconferencing site.

IT World Webcasts

<http://www.itworld.com/Webcasts/bytopic/13/index.html>

Webcasts available to enhance knowledge about Information Technology.

SirsiDynix Institute

<http://www.sirsidynixinstitute.com/>

A free online forum of webcasts for the professional development of librarians. Free registration is required and seating is limited.

INSTANT MESSAGING

Libraries use Instant Messaging as a chat resource to do real-time reference service. At designated dates and times, librarians or staff man a workstation in order to be available to interact with patrons. A multi-technological client installed on the PC enables the conversation to take place. Some of the more popular IM clients include Trillian, Gaim, Proteus or Miranda IM.

Yahoo.com, AOL.com, MSN.com all provide IM networks. IM accounts are usually included in the Internet and other online services available.

Trillian

<http://www.ceruleanstudios.com/>

Allows for chatting across platforms.

Chat Technology for Libraries

<http://www.librarysupportstaff.com/4chatinfo.html>

IM: Breaking Down Barrier: Instant Messaging in Libraries

http://walkingpaper.org/presentation/IM_CIL205.pdf

SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES

Social Networks can be used to create communities and expand social connections. In a social network each individual or organization can create a website about themselves. Through these websites others get to know them and form relationships and communities.

MySpace

<http://MySpace.com>

A web site devoted to the free sharing of individual information.

Second Life

<http://secondlife.com/>

A virtual reality community with over 800,000 members. Members join, build an avatar and live in the second life much as in real life. Members may own land and participate by using their space as they please. Residents use Linden Dollars in the virtual reality which can be converted at designated money exchanges to US dollars.

“PC Minimum System Recommendations: Internet Connection: Cable or DSL, Computer Processor 1.6GHz Pentium 4 or Athlon 2000+ or better, Computer Memory: 512MB or better, Video/Graphics Card: nVidia GeForce FX 5600, GeForce, 6600, or better, or ATI Radeon 9600, X600, or better.”

WebJunction

<http://www.webjunction.org/do/Home;jsessionid=C21754E96BD385A719D6BCDFA19B9058>

An online community for librarians to share ideas, do training, make announcements and have fun.

Infotangle

<http://infotangle.blogsome.com/>

An author of a forthcoming book on Web 2.0 for librarians. The blog is a conversation in anticipation of the book directed at librarians. It is a comprehensive look at Web 2.0 and its associated tools.

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DASER: Digital Archives for Science & Engineering Resources

<https://www.asis.org/Conferences/Daser/index.htm> A symposium scheduled for November 3, 2006 in San Antonio, TX to discuss the future of librarianship and its relationship to emerging technologies.

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